

§ 1120.31 A&TBCB receipt of requests; responsibilities of Freedom of Information Officer.

(a) Upon receipt of a written request, the Freedom of Information Officer must mark the request with the date of receipt and must attach to the request a control slip indicating the Request Identification Number and other pertinent administrative information. The Freedom of Information Officer must immediately forward the request and control slip to the A&TBCB office which the FOIA Officer believes to be responsible for maintaining the records requested. The Freedom of Information Officer must retain a full copy of the request and control slip and must monitor the handling of the request to ensure a timely response.

(b) The Freedom of Information Officer must maintain a file concerning each request received. The file must contain a copy of the request, initial and appeal determinations, and other pertinent correspondence and records.

(c) The Freedom of Information Officer must collect and maintain the information necessary to compile the reports required by 5 U.S.C. 552(d).

§ 1120.32 A&TBCB action on requests.

(a) The FOIA Officer is delegated the authority to issue initial determinations concerning records which he or she believes are in the custody of a Board member, an employee of a member's agency, or an employee of a public member. When the FOIA Officer receives such a request, he or she shall forward it to the member, employee of a member agency, or employee of a public member whom the FOIA Officer believes to have custody of the records, requesting the records. The person to whom the request is forwarded shall, within three days of receipt of the FOIA Officer's request, either furnish the records requested to the FOIA Officer or inform the FOIA Officer of the time when they will be furnished. The FOIA Officer shall then determine whether or not to disclose the documents. For purposes of such requests and their processing under this subpart, the FOIA Officer is considered the office handling the requests.

(b) Heads of staff offices are delegated the authority to issue initial de-

terminations, other records which are in their respective custody.

(c) Whenever an A&TBCB office receives a request forwarded by the FOIA Officer, the office should:

(1) Take action under § 1120.26, if required, to obtain a better description of the records requested;

(2) Locate the records as promptly as possible, or determine that:

(i) The records are not known to exist; or

(ii) They are located at another A&TBCB office; or

(iii) They are located at another Federal agency and not possessed by the A&TBCB.

(3) When appropriate, take action under § 1120.53(b) to obtain payment or assurance of payment;

(4) Determine which of the requested records legally must be withheld, and why (see § 1120.42(b), *Release of exempt documents*);

(5) Of the requested records which are exempt from mandatory disclosure but which legally may be disclosed (see § 1120.42(a)), determine which records will be withheld, and why;

(6) Issue an initial determination within the allowed period (see § 1120.31), specifying (individually or by category) which records will be disclosed and which will be withheld, and signed by a person authorized to issue the determination under paragraph (a) of this section (see § 1120.33, *Initial denials of requests*);

(7) Furnish the Freedom of Information Officer a copy of the determination; and

(8) If the determination denies a request, furnish the Freedom of Information Officer the name of the A&TBCB member(s) or employee(s) having custody of the records and maintain the records in a manner permitting their prompt forwarding to the General Counsel upon request if an appeal from the initial denial is filed. (See also § 1120.34.)

(d) If it appears that some or all of the requested records are not in the possession of the A&TBCB office which has been assigned responsibility for responding to the request but may be in the possession of some A&TBCB office, the responding office must so inform

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the Freedom of Information officer immediately.

(e) An initial determination to disclose documents must provide the requested documents or provide the opportunity to inspect and/or obtain copies of the documents.

§ 1120.33 Time allowed for initial action on requests.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, as soon as possible and not later than the tenth working day after the day on which the Freedom of Information Officer receives a request for records, the A&TBCB office responsible for responding to the request must issue a written determination to the requestor stating which of the requested records, will, and which will not, be released and the reason for any denial of a request.

(b) The period of 10 working days is measured from the date the request is first received and logged in by the Freedom of Information Officer.

(c) There is excluded from the period of 10 working days (or any extension) any time which elapses between the date that a requestor is notified by the A&TBCB under § 1120.26 that his or her request does not reasonably identify the records sought, and the date that the requestor furnishes a reasonable identification.

(d) There is excluded from the period of 10 working days (or any extension) any time which elapses between the date that a requestor is notified by an A&TBCB office under § 1120.53(b) that prepayment of fees is required, and the date that the requestor pays (or makes suitable arrangements to pay) the charges.

(e) The A&TBCB office taking action under § 1120.31 may extend the basic 10-day period established under paragraph (a) of this section by a period not to exceed 10 additional working days if—

(1) The office notifies the Freedom of Information Officer;

(2) The office notifies the requestor in writing within the basic 10-day period stating the reasons for the extension and the date by which the office expects to be able to issue a determination;

(3) The extension is reasonably necessary to properly process the particular request; and

(4) One or more of the following unusual circumstances require the extension:

(i) There is a need to search for and collect the requested records from field facilities or other establishments that are separate from the office processing the request;

(ii) There is a need to search for, collect, and/or appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records which are demanded in a single request; or

(iii) There is need for consultation with another agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request or among two or more components of the A&TBCB. The office must conduct the consultation with all practicable speed.

(f) Should the A&TBCB fail to issue a determination within the 10-day period or any authorized extension as to an initial request, or during the period for consideration of an appeal, the requestor shall be deemed to have exhausted his or her administrative remedies with respect to such.

In the latter situation, the requestor may commence an action in an appropriate Federal district court to obtain the records.

§ 1120.34 Initial denials of requests.

(a) An initial denial of a request may be issued only for the following reasons:

(1) The record is not under the A&TBCB's control;

(2) The record has been published in the FEDERAL REGISTER or is otherwise published and available for sale;

(3) A statutory provision, provision of this part, or court order requires that the information not be disclosed;

(4) The record is exempt from mandatory disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552(b) and the responding office has decided not to disclose it under §§ 1120.41 and 1120.42;

(5) The record is believed to be in the A&TBCB's custody but has not yet been located. (See paragraph (f) of this section.)

(b) Each initial denial of a request shall—